

Mr. Speaker, we are making progress. Let us continue to work harder and do more for the American taxpayers of this country.

AGRICULTURAL BILL PAYMENT LIMITATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon I will introduce a motion to instruct conferees on the agricultural bill that suggests that we need to incorporate payment limitations.

Payment limitations now in effect are not binding simply because there is a loophole in the law which allows many farmers to receive \$1 million-plus in farm benefit payments. One reason I feel so strongly that it is reasonable to have some kind of payment limits is that the public thinks that farmers are just being given a great deal of money, regardless of their need, regardless of their size. If we are going to have farm program policy in the United States, then I and many others suggest that we focus our efforts on those farmers that need that kind of help.

We talk about the family farm, and, of course, we can get in arguments about what is a family farm or how big is a family farm. But I think most of us can agree that if someone has 40,000, 50,000 or 60,000 acres and is taking in millions of dollars of farm program payments, then probably this is not the mainstream type of family farm that most of us think of.

I would like to read some quotes from the Senate debate when this language was put into the Senate version of the bill. What this shows is that there is tremendous bipartisan support for some kind of a limit on these farm payments.

Senator GRASSLEY, Republican from Iowa, said, "When is enough enough? How long will the American public put up with these programs that send out billions of dollars to the biggest farm entities?"

BYRON DORGAN, Senator from North Dakota, a Democrat, said, "Many of the benefits provided through the current ag programs are being funneled to large, non-family agricultural corporations while family farmers are being shortchanged. That is just plain wrong."

Senator JOHN KERRY, Democrat of Massachusetts: "This amendment ensures that farm aid will target the people who need it the most, the small family farmers that actually work the land and are the lifeblood of our rural communities. It is a pleasure to support this amendment."

Senator CHUCK HAGEL, Republican: "The amendment would remove the loopholes that allow a handful of large farmers to receive unlimited payments.

Without real payment-limitation reform, we will continue to weaken the same farmers we claim to want to help."

I want to just mention what that loophole is. There are price-support benefit limits on a couple ways a farmer can derive those benefits, specifically the loan deficiency payment and the marketing loans. But what is left out of that payment limit, which tends to hoodwink a lot of people when we brag there are some kind of payment limits in the House bill, is non-recourse loans. You can do an end-run and farmers can have a non-recourse loan that they can forfeit, or the government will give you the certificate that results in the same kind of subsidy benefit payments for price supports as do the loan deficiency payments in marketing loans.

It gets rather complicated, Mr. Speaker; but the fact is that we are calling for, and we are going to have, a debate in this House tomorrow on the reasonableness of having some kind of price limitations.

I am a farmer from Michigan. I served as deputy administrator of Farm Programs in the USDA in the early seventies. Currently 82 percent of the farm program payments go to 17 percent of the largest farm operations. If we do not control this, if we do not have some kind of a cap, some kind of a limit, we are going to lose the good will of the people of this Chamber, of the people in the Senate, of the people in the United States that really want to help those farmers. So payment limitations of \$275,000 per farmer per year is reasonable as structured in the Senate version. I hope we can do that.

A couple more quotes, with your permission, Mr. Speaker. Senator RICHARD LUGAR said, "This is a modest amendment. I stress 'modest.' There were 98,835 recipients of farm subsidies in Indiana during 1996 to 2000. Only six of that 98,000 would be affected by this amendment."

Senator TOM DASCHLE says, "I am pleased we were able to pass this important payment limitation amendment."

The President of the United States says we need to help those small and medium-sized farmers that need it the most.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will support me on this payment limitation that the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR) and I are offering tomorrow.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 42 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PENCE) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: "O the happiness of the heavenly Alleluia sung in security, in fear of no adversity!" These words of Your servant Augustine from the fifth century sound melodious, as from another world, when read in the springtime of our conflicted lives.

Lord, many Americans wonder if we have lost an innocence never to be regained. In the midst of war and unpredictable terrorism, evil sometimes seems more creative than goodness. Fear not only reveals the most fragile ones around us, uncertainty can cause the strong to be hesitant and slow down a Nation's progress.

Reassure us by Your presence, Lord. Out of compassion for Your people, grant a glimpse of Your glory so that hopefulness springs eternal and confidence is restored.

With hearts fixed on lasting values, give the Members of Congress practical wisdom to address the substantive issues which truly affect the lives of their constituents. May their work together build signs of hope that will move this country into a bright future. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. PITTS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

PRIVATE CALENDAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is the day for the call of the Private Calendar. The Clerk will call the bill on the Private Calendar.

NANCY B. WILSON

The Clerk called the bill (H.R. 392) for the relief of Nancy B. Wilson.

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be passed over without prejudice.